

Any truck with a safety violation will be stopped until the problem is fixed. Yes, that ought to happen. So we have a very distinct list of items we are trying to do here.

In the first 30 days of the program, 17 Mexican truck companies will be given operating authority. Additional companies will be added each month. So there is some order to this program.

I say to my colleagues that this has been dealt with very methodically. The requirements of Congress have been met. It is a pilot program on a temporary basis with a 6-month audit. We ought to do this program.

I cannot help but think that there is something more going on here than safety concerns. I do think there is an attitude: We don't want those Mexican truckdrivers up here. Sure, there are some who might not be as good as they should be, but that is true with American truckdrivers, too, on occasion. What about Canadian truckdrivers?

I feel we are making a mistake if we try to stop this temporary pilot program, and I think it is going to seriously damage our ability to work with the Mexican Government, with their new President, in not only this area but a lot of other areas.

I urge my colleagues to look carefully at what has been done by our Department of Transportation. Let's not assume the worst of our neighbors from Mexico. I have known a lot of truckers, and I know the kinds of problems one can have with trucking. But these are well-intentioned, hard-working people. They are an important part of our economy, and we need to have free-flowing trade that benefits both countries, all countries in a way of which we can be proud.

If we find a problem, fix it. But to just say no, we are going to stop it after 14 years of planning and preparation because some people—I don't know—don't want the competition? This is not an immigration issue. This is a transportation issue. We can do this. We can do it sensibly. But we should defeat the Dorgan amendment. We should allow the pilot program to go forward and make sure it is done properly.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MENENDEZ). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRANSPORTATION APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I want to take a few minutes to talk about the bill that is presently on the floor. It is a good bill, and it couldn't be done at a more appropriate time. It is a critical issue. We hear many people

talking about our decaying transportation infrastructure. The bill is focused primarily on the transportation side, but it also applies to other important subjects, including housing. But when we see the reports about how structurally deficient and functionally obsolete our transportation system is, and where we stand relative to other countries—even some third world countries—we should want to catch up here.

When flights are taking off and landing on time, when our railroads are carrying more passengers and cargo safely, when our roads and bridges are in good condition—our economy thrives, and so does the well-being of our people. We don't have anything that measures the stress factor of motorists, but I am sure if every driver were wearing some kind of a meter that recorded stress levels, the needles would go off their face. Tempers rise, time is lost, and appointments are not kept.

But when we fail to adequately fund these priorities, our economy and our infrastructure falters. That is why this bill is critical to our economy.

My colleague, the Presiding Officer, also from the wonderful State of New Jersey, knows we have to get things done. We have to get people and cargo moving. We have a tiny State, with lots of people, the most crowded State in the country, and transportation is essential. However, we don't have a monopoly on congestion, delays, and pollution from travel.

I remember days when I went back and forth to work from the Capitol and that the ride used to be 15 minutes. Now sometimes it can take half an hour. Look at the bridges and the roads around the Capitol, and we see it. Go anyplace that has a thriving population and you will find the same problem.

Our State of New Jersey is a global gateway and a national crossroad for transportation—air, railroad, and sea. We have the largest seaport on the East Coast. Each year, millions of cargo containers are put on trucks and trains at New Jersey's ports, bound for cities and towns across the interior of America. Newark's Liberty International Airport is one of the busiest, and is the most delayed in the country. We have that unfortunate distinction right now.

Each week, many of New Jersey's almost 9 million residents ride trains or buses or drive their cars across bridges and through tunnels connecting them to jobs outside the State or within the State. Last year, 54 million cars, trucks, and buses crossed the George Washington Bridge from Fort Lee, NJ, into New York City, by way of example.

After the tragedy in Minnesota, I began working with State leaders to make sure our bridges in New Jersey could safely and effectively handle the increasing volume of cars and trucks. I know many of my colleagues did the same thing. Thirty-four percent of the

bridges in the State of New Jersey are deficient, which is higher than the national average of 27 percent. Think about what these percentages mean. It is saying that one out of three bridges is structurally deficient or functionally obsolete and in trouble. That is the way it seems to be in many places in the country. Enormous parts of the highway system are not able to handle the volume of traffic that passes over these areas.

Congress understands that bridges in America should not disappear into dust and rubble, costing lives and untold economic consequence. That is why in this bill we included \$5 billion for Federal bridge programs, a 20-percent increase over last year. I was pleased to work with Senator MURRAY to add another \$1 billion to strengthen our bridges.

As the chairman of two subcommittees overseeing Federal transportation programs, I am going to continue to do my part to keep our bridges strong so New Jerseyans can get to their jobs and back to their families safely.

We want to strengthen these bridges and give people the assurance that when they cross over they are safe. I talk to people who say they are reluctant to cross over some of the bridges we have in our area. Reluctant. But we take it for granted you have to do it in order to get where you must be.

I want to thank Subcommittee Chairman MURRAY and Ranking Member BOND for building a smart and strong transportation and housing appropriations bill. It funds Federal bridge repair programs, airline safety inspections, bus and rail transportation systems, and even operation of the air traffic control system.

In particular, I am pleased that the committee agreed to increase funds for Amtrak, our Nation's passenger railroad. Between the lines of cars on the highway and the long security lines at airports, American travelers need and deserve a choice. If one wants to see what a difference it could make, travel to some of the countries in Europe or Japan where they have world-class passenger rail service, where a trip from Brussels, Belgium, to Paris, France, a 200-mile distance, is accomplished in 1 hour 25 minutes. If you tried to get an airplane to take you that distance, you couldn't. They do not fly that way anymore. It is superfluous when you can get from the inside of one city to inside the other city and not have to go through the torment of the long lines and other inconveniences of getting on airplanes.

Today I had the experience of getting on an airplane at LaGuardia Airport in New York. My home in New Jersey is mid-way between LaGuardia and Newark airports. The weather didn't look that bad. We got on the airplane at 9 o'clock for a 38-minute flight to be here for a vote at 11. But due to congestion, we arrived here at a quarter past 11. It is somewhat amusing, with an odd twist, when the pilot gets on and tells

you how many minutes the flying time is because it is almost irrelevant. The flying time doesn't tell you how long it is going to take. It can take 38 minutes in the air, but it can take an hour and a half on the ground, which is pretty much what happened to us this morning. As a consequence, Mr. President—and you know how important casting your vote is around here—we missed a vote this morning, two other Senators and myself who were on that flight.

With all the problems with our transportation systems, President Bush either doesn't get it or just won't do it. He wants to put brakes on progress. The day after the terrible tragedy in Minnesota, when rescue crews were still searching for missing people, I heard the President respond, and he said: I am disappointed the Congress hasn't sent me a spending bill. But 2 weeks earlier he said he was going to veto the transportation spending bill because it was too much money. Can't have it both ways, Mr. President. And the public suffers.

President Bush's funding request would put Amtrak into bankruptcy, but expanding Amtrak is one way to get people off of the highways in many cases and out of the skyways. It is unacceptable for the Nation's passenger railroad service. Amtrak is experiencing record ridership levels, and it is unfair to the traveling public not to put the money in there that we have to. The bill before us would provide \$1.5 billion for Amtrak, providing the funding it needs to survive and to grow. I am a frequent user of Amtrak, and I know very well that while the service is radically improved from where it was, more needs to be done to accommodate the volume of passengers who would use the railroad.

The funding here includes a new \$100 million grant program for States to expand passenger rail service. This proposal stems from a plan Senator LOTT and I have developed to reauthorize Amtrak.

I also thank my subcommittee leaders for agreeing to my request to include additional funding for the Department of Transportation's Office of Aviation Enforcement, to be able to protect airline passengers' rights. Now it is a small group of people trying to handle passenger complaints, and they cannot get to them. It is ridiculous. How do we in the Government know what is going on if we cannot process complaints that come in? This office is the only place where airline travelers can turn when they are mistreated by airline companies, and they know very well this mistreatment is frequent.

Right now this enforcement office only counts most complaints. Instead of acting on them, they collect them. It is like a mail repository. This includes complaints about overbooked and canceled flights, deceptive advertising, failing to process fare refunds and adjustments, unfair administration of frequent flier programs, and even acts of discrimination upon disabled passengers.

With this new funding we can make sure that airlines provide better service to all their customers and act on the complaints a customer files, not just note that they have arrived.

Furthermore, I am pleased the committee agreed at markup to include an amendment I put in limiting pollution by some waste-handling facilities near railroads. It is an issue of great significance to New Jersey. We have seen fires and pollution emitted from waste-handling facilities. The problem is we cannot get at them and correct them because of a loophole in the Federal law which lets some solid waste processors do business without regulation, allowing unimpeded pollution of our water, air, and lands. My amendment will at least temporarily close this loophole.

I have a more comprehensive bill which will close this loophole permanently, and I am working with railroads and other stakeholders in hopes we can get it passed this year.

We now have transportation and public housing programs together in this bill. Perhaps it is just the way it ought to be to accommodate life in better form for our citizens. Public housing programs provide homes for some 38,000 people in my State alone. Public housing needs have been underfunded by at least \$1 billion in the last 6 years. The bill also maintains funding for the Hope VI program, instead of eliminating it, which President Bush has tried to do. Hope VI has generated more than \$1 billion to revitalize distressed public housing in New Jersey alone, to make sure these families have an affordable home.

At a time when we see problems with home ownership for lots of people—bankruptcies in abundance—people will have to find different places to house themselves and their families. We have to make these investments. The housing stock that we have is often inadequate, inadequate not simply in numbers but in quality as well. This funding we are getting will be especially important.

President Bush, as I mentioned before, has threatened to veto the bill because it contains \$4 billion more for transportation and housing needs than he requested. A veto would cause people to lose their homes. A veto would cause bridges to go unrepaired—bridges in dangerous condition. We have to fix these things to be publicly responsible.

President Bush is willing to have us spend \$3 billion every week in Iraq. We want to make sure we provide funding for those soldiers who are serving overseas right now, but we also need to fund our needs here at home.

There is an unacceptable problem we see in our country. We do not invest our limited funds back into our infrastructure as we so desperately need to do, and at the same time we are continuing a war that, for many of us, is questionable and ought to be terminated very quickly.

It is about time the President's priorities matched up with the needs of

Americans at home. This bill will go some way toward helping that.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SANDERS). The Senator from Minnesota is recognized.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, the last time I addressed this body was before we adjourned for the August recess, and I had just returned from surveying the enormous damage that occurred when the I-35W bridge collapsed in Minneapolis. It had just collapsed the day before.

While I spoke, the dust from this tragedy had yet to settle. Well-trained first responders had arrived at the scene, and they were heroically rescuing survivors from the wreckage. The entire country was mourning for the victims while praying for the ones yet to be found. Everyone was expressing relief that a schoolbus filled with little children had miraculously escaped disaster.

Brave divers, despite mental and physical exhaustion, were working around the clock to find loved ones, people such as Patrick Holmes, who was driving home to his young wife Jennifer and their two children, who was on the bridge when that happened; people such as Sadiya Sahal, a pregnant nursing student and her 2-year-old daughter Hannah, who were headed to a relative's house when the bridge crumbled beneath them.

The police, the fire department, the emergency personnel, and ordinary citizens all came together. The tragedy of the day was met with enormous generosity from the community.

It was also met with generosity from this body. United in bipartisanship, every single Senator agreed that they would help to provide the necessary means to help Minnesota rebuild. It was done in record time—60 hours.

Today, as I stand before this body, the dust has finally settled, and the promise was that when the dust settled we would provide the necessary means to help Minnesota rebuild. On August 20, the nearly 3-week recovery effort finally came to an end when the last known victim was found. The loss of Greg Jolstad, or "Jolly" as he was known by his family and friends, brings the official death toll to 13.

Much of our massive eight-lane interstate highway bridge is now awkwardly draped over the bluffs of the Mississippi River while the remaining tons upon tons of steel and concrete lay buried below the river.

As I said that day, a bridge just should not fall down in America. But it did. And although we do not know yet why the I-35W bridge failed, and while we still mourn those who lost their lives, the rebuilding effort has begun.

With the initial money that Congress appropriated, Minnesota has increased transit options to serve commuters, set up detours to restore traffic flow, cleared structural debris, and has begun to lay the general framework for rebuilding.

As Minnesota continues to clear the path for a new bridge, I know this body, as they promised that evening, stands ready to ensure that the appropriate funding is made available to rebuild it. It is one of the most heavily traveled bridges in the State and vital to our economy. If anyone would imagine the most major bridge in their metropolitan area, the most major highway overpass, suddenly falling into a river, you would understand. It is a bridge that takes people downtown, that brings students to one of the biggest universities in this country, and it brings hard-working Minnesotans to their jobs every day. But most important, it is the bridge that connects countless people with their families and friends.

On August 3, this Congress made a promise to the people of Minnesota that we would help rebuild the bridge. Today I come to the floor to ensure that we make good on that promise.

I am very happy with and I supported this effort to look at repairs across the country. That is what we just voted on today, and it passed. But I think we should make clear that appropriation did not include the money that Congress promised for the Minnesota bridge. It was used as the key example of why we needed to make repairs across the country, but it did not include the money to repair our bridge.

The last time I addressed this body, the day after the bridge collapsed, I said the rebuilding effort is going to be a long process. It is not just going to end tonight. Today I am here to take the next step in that rebuilding process. Our goal is to get this bridge rebuilt and to get our metropolitan area moving again.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation concluded that the loss of this critical bridge costs our economy \$400,000 per day. This is primarily due to lost travel time for commuters, for commercial truckers, for businesses closed down. This means our economy has already lost well over \$8 million since the bridge collapsed.

As this fiscal year comes to a close, I am dedicated to getting the funding for our State and the entire Midwest. We need to rebuild this bridge. We would like to rebuild this bridge as soon as possible, as I know this country wants to do and this body pledged to do. That is why we will work on this bill and whatever other bills we need to work on to get this funding for this bridge.

I applaud the efforts of my colleagues to get bridge repair for every State across the country, but we are devoted to ensuring that Congress make good on its promise and rebuild this bridge that is the symbol for why we need to make infrastructure repairs across this country.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this morning, due to flight delays, I missed

the rollcall vote on the confirmation of William Lindsay Osteen, Jr., to be U.S. District Judge for the Middle District of North Carolina. Had I been present for this vote, I would have voted to confirm this nomination.

PRESERVING STRONG RELATIONS WITH OUR INTERNATIONAL NEIGHBORS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, among the important issues I wish to discuss this morning is an important issue, an international border issue with our friends and neighbors in Canada and Mexico, that could have severe implications for the social and economic ways of life for border communities in my own State of Vermont but all across the country.

In the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks, a number of new border security measures have been put in place, all with the express goal of preventing another terrorist incident. I worked hard to provide balance and needed resources and to ensure that in the intervening years we did not focus solely on our southern border. I also have tried to convey to the administration and to this body something of the special relationship we have with our northern neighbor, Canada.

It is convenient to forget that most of the 9/11 hijackers entered the United States with legal visas. They would not have been stopped at any border. Some were on secret watch lists by this Government, but they were not being watched. And even later on, the Bush administration sent them official letters after they had killed themselves and thousands of innocent people in their attacks. The Bush administration had them on a watch list but did not watch them. In reaction, after these mistakes, the administration has demanded billions of dollars for constructing border fences, seeking to develop and to deploy surveillance technologies, and adding troops along our borders. Now in doing this, we have snared some illicit drug shipments, we have snared a few criminals. We have not picked up many terrorists.

Nobody questions that any country has a right to protect its borders, as we do to protect ours, but we should do it sensibly and intelligently. Instead, the administration's policy threatens to fray the social fabric of countless communities that straddle the border. They have needlessly offended our neighbors, they have sacrificed much of the traditional good will we have enjoyed, and they have undermined our own economy in border States. Local chambers of commerce along the border estimate that the costs of the administration's plans will amount to hundreds of billions of dollars and, I might say, the loss of thousands upon thousands of American jobs.

I have heard from many Vermonters about problems they have encountered at U.S. border crossings, from long traffic backups to invasive searches

and questions, to inadequate communications from Federal authorities about new facilities and procedures. Such a top-down approach does not work well in interwoven communities along the border where people cross daily from one side to the other for jobs, shopping, and cultural events.

I live an hour's drive from the Canadian border. Traditionally in my State, as in most border States, people go back and forth all the time. Many of us have family members in Canada. We have enjoyed an over 5,000-mile-long unguarded frontier. Canada has been an important trading partner. It has been a friendly neighbor not only to Vermont but to the rest of the United States for more than 200 years. It is in the best interest of both of our countries to keep those relationships as positive and productive as possible. Post 9/11, everyone on both sides of the border recognized the potential threat and security needs. We have hardened security around the U.S. Capitol, hardened it around the White House, and built fences near San Diego. But those procedures do not work on Canusa Avenue in Beebe Plain, a two-lane road where one side of the road is Vermont and the other side is Quebec. That is actually true. This is a street, an avenue. On one side, you are in Vermont; on the other side, you are in Quebec. What are we going to do, put an enormous barrier down the middle of the street? People are used to going back and forth to their neighbors to borrow a cup of flour or something such as that. Are they going to take two hours to go through some kind of an unnecessary, baseless search?

And we have the Haskell Free Library and Opera House in Derby Line, VT, and Stanstead, Quebec. The library and opera house is half in Derby Line, VT, half in Stanstead, Quebec. It straddles the international border. Mr. President, I invite you to come see that some time. It is a beautiful piece of architecture.

That is why I am so troubled by the so-called Western Hemisphere Travel Initiatives, which would require individuals from the United States, Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean to present passports or other documents proving citizenship before entering the United States. This is a dramatic change in the way border crossings have been processed in the western hemisphere since the Treaty of Paris set up the international boundary to Canada in 1783. That is already costing us greatly.

The Departments of State and Homeland Security have been charged with implementing this law. They should be coordinating their efforts with our neighbors in Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean to ensure a smooth transition at our borders. Unfortunately, as I detailed to Secretary Rice and Secretary Chertoff on several occasions, there are serious problems in the ways in which their agencies have pushed forward with implementation of the